

BACKGROUND: Each year, the City of Alexandria produces its General Assembly Legislative Package. The goal of the package is to organize, prioritize, and communicate the City’s legislative and budget priorities to the community, stakeholders, and legislators. In addition, because Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, localities only have the authority expressly granted to them by the legislature by state statute or in their charter. Localities in Virginia, including Alexandria, therefore often request legislation to grant them enabling authority for specific powers they do not already have, which are included in the Legislative Package.

The requests in the draft Legislative Package generally originate from City Council members, City staff, and boards and commissions, with additional input coming from the public through the public hearing process. For the past several months, staff has been working with Council members, City departments, and boards and commissions to develop legislative and funding proposals for the City’s 2022 Legislative Package.

City Council will hold a Work Session with the City’s General Assembly delegation immediately preceding the November 9, 2021, meeting which will help advise the Legislative Package. This will be an opportunity for Council to get input on their priorities for the 2022 session, the impact of the November 2, 2021, election, the practicalities of how the 2022 Session will function in the current COVID-19 environment, as well as their feedback on the draft Legislative Package.

DISCUSSION: The draft 2022 Legislative Package as presented has proposals organized into two sections - Legislative Principles and Legislative Priorities. The section of Legislative Principles is structured around the City’s Strategic Plan and creates a clear nexus between the City’s goals and the legislative and funding measures necessary for us to achieve these goals. This year staff included the ALL Alexandria resolution in the Legislative Principles as well, in order to reflect the City’s goals in the area of race and social equity in the Legislative Package.

The Legislative Principles are, generally, broadly crafted and focus on comprehensive legislative strategies rather than specific legislative tactics. The Legislative Priorities are, generally, specific revenue and legislative proposals that the City has identified as the issues of greatest impact to the City. These are the issues the City intends to continue expending significant political capital on and the issues that we intend to ask our General Assembly delegation to engage in on behalf of the City.

In addition, the November 9 input from Council, the Package will receive input from the community and other outside stakeholders at the Public Hearing scheduled for November 13.

As City looks toward the 2022 General Assembly session, pre-filing of bills will begin in mid-November. On December 16, 2021, Governor Northam will present his outgoing biennial budget as well as any amendments to the current State budget. Staff will report to Council on the Governor’s recommendations shortly after they are released. The 2022 General Assembly Session will be a “long” 60-day Session, beginning January 12, 2022.

The City Council Legislative Subcommittee will begin reviewing pre-filed bills in early December; these meetings will become weekly meetings starting on January 7, 2022 and will continue until the Friday after the final day for bill introduction. These meetings allow the Legislative Subcommittee to review legislation that may have an impact on the City with the input of City staff subject matter experts and recommend positions on this legislation. These positions are subsequently reviewed by the full Council and communicated to the Alexandria delegation in the General Assembly for their consideration.

The City’s Legislative Director, Sarah Taylor, continues to represent the City at the General Assembly. She will

report to you regularly on the status of the City's legislative priorities as well as other legislative and budget issues that are sure to arise during the 2021 General Assembly Session.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. DRAFT City Legislative Principles for the 2022 Virginia General Assembly Session
2. DRAFT City Legislative Priorities for the 2022 Virginia General Assembly Session (forthcoming)

STAFF:

Laura Triggs, Deputy City Manager

Sarah Graham Taylor, Assistant City Manager, Legislative Director